1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
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of the fact) and was publicly announced some three or four weeks later by beating the royal drum and summoning relatives from far and wide, goats being killed, and a feast held. These rites are probably a late importation from other tribes, as the Katab originally never had any chiefs in the present sense of the word.

It was customary in former times that eight days after the death of an old important man a human skull and the skulls of a buffalo, hartebeest, and roan (obtained from the priest of Elenowum) were displayed, one on each hut of the deceased's compound. This is interesting as showing that the skull cult was in some way identified with the cult of the dead, but the Katab are not able to suggest in what way. The skulls would not, they said, be put on the top of a house in which a woman was weaning a child, as that would cause the speedy death of the child. The widow goes into mourning, and, on the conclusion of her mourning, a feast is held, the skulls being returned to the priest of Elenowum.

The real funeral feast, however, must take place in the dry season, as it would be impossible during the rains to assemble relatives who were busy with their farming duties. The funeral feast is, therefore, held after harvest and lasts for two days. It is held not at the graveside, but in an open space in the village. The women of the town in which the old man or woman had died prepare the beer. The senior male relatives go to the *obwai* hut, and after a symposium accompanied by the beating of a double-barrelled pottery vase which emits a hollow deathlike tone they come forth and join in a general dance accompanied by drums, horns, and zithers (imported from the Bauchi Plateau). One of the songs sung at the dance is sung in Hausa, as the Katab say that none of their own songs are so euphousion :—

"Baban dorina, dama rua, wa ka shiga ?
(Mighty hippopotamus, disturber of the waters, who can enter there ?)
Dodon Gwari, giwa da ragama,
(Spook of the Gwari, elephant with a headstall)
Yayan Bakwa, suna hana giwa dawa
(Sons of the Hausa, who drive away the elephant)
Kajin giddarku su je su kwana lafiya
(Chickens of your household may they go and sleep in peace)
Akwian giddarku su je su kwana lafiya
(Goats of your household may they go and sleep in peace)
Yayan giddarku su je su kwana lafiya
(Children of your household may they go and sleep in peace)."

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765 *Mourning Customs.*—A widow allows her hair to grow long, refrains from washing and smears her body daily with ochre for one to two months (varying in accordance with the worldly status of the deceased husband). At the end of this period she is shaven and washed in the river by female relatives. If she is [587] still comparatively young she will have a suitor, and he will, at the conclusion of her mourning, present her with a goat, etc., that she may be able to provide a feast for friends and relatives. Males do not engage in mourning rites. If, therefore, a man loses his wife he summons a married sister to come and perform the rites on his behalf. She remains in seclusion during the period of mourning, and allows her hair to grow long. On the conclusion of the rites she returns to her husband's village.

613 622 648 *Government and Law.*—It may be surmised that, prior to the time when they came under the Habe of Zaria, the Katab tribe consisted of a number of unconsolidated groups without any central organization. Each group or sub-clan may have acknowledged the authority of its own Magajin Elenowum in things spiritual and temporal, but the existing system of sub-clan chiefs charged with executive and administrative powers seems to have been evolved in order to regulate the relations of the tribe with the Habe of Kauru, who had established their suzerainty over the Katab long before they themselves became subject to the Bornu-Fulani dynasty of Zaria at the beginning of last century.

648 622 554 778 The Hausa town of Zangon Katab was founded during the early Kauru régime as a caravanserai for Hausa traders, and as a base from which the Kauru chiefs could extract tribute from the Katab and exercise such administrative control as was necessary for this purpose. In the matter of tribute it would appear that the Kauru chiefs dealt direct with each village area, ignoring the clan organization. But for purposes of such general administration as existed, a headman was appointed for each sub-clan, and his fealty was sworn on the sacred sword which was a characteristic feature of the Zaria polity. Sacred swords were granted to chiefs of importance throughout the Zaria dominions and treated with the utmost awe by the recipients, who guarded them closely and sprinkled them regularly with the blood of a chicken or goat. Minor chiefs and village headmen were not granted a sword, but were sworn in on a sword specially

587 Secondary affinal marriage occurs: a man may inherit widows of his grandfather, father and brother, but only when these are young women and do not have adult lineal descendants with whom they can live.[36a]

595 Seniority is important among women of the compound, as among men, but how seniority is determined, in view of the complexities arising through the institution of secondary marriage, is not clear.[37] A husband spends two nights with each of his wives in turn, in his own hut, if he has one. Men and women eat in separate groups, the women always in or before the hut of the chief wife. If there is a tendency towards friction between successive generations, relations between alternate generations are characterized by a degree of cordiality. According to Meek, relations between and among siblings reflect a similar convention: on the whole, alternate children are closer and take greater pleasure in one another's company than successive children.

[264]

602

Death and Burial

753 Meek's statement that "illnesses and premature deaths are ascribed to witchcraft, and those who die of smallpox are believed to have been witches," is not apparently meant to be taken literally.[38] Without exception treatments for illness 757 described by Meek appear to have no element of magic about them: there is even "inoculation for smallpox, the fluid being taken from the pustules of a man suffering from a mild attack, and transfused into the blood of a healthy man by means of a scratch made with a razor," which, though it differs from current European medical procedure, is not alleged to be a witch-finding ordeal.

764 Interment generally follows death within 12 to 18 hours, though the burial of a civil chief, whose death is kept secret for seven days, may be delayed for 24 hours 766 if necessary to comply with the rule that a chief must be buried under cover of night. The body of a commoner is clothed in the short Hausa-Fulani gown (*tobe*), that of a chief in a robe (*riga*), and finally wrapped in an ordinary mat of palm-fibre. Burial is generally in the home-compound; old men and chiefs are buried beneath the entrance-hut. The grave is described as decanter-shaped, about 6 ft. deep. If the deceased has been a man of importance, a stone is set up on the grave to mark the site for his descendants who may wish to make offerings to their dead ancestor (see *Religious Beliefs and Practices*, below).

When burial—presided over by the *magajin elenowum*—is complete, horns are sounded (if the deceased had reached a respectable age), beer is drunk, and a feast may follow. In the case of a chief, his immediate relatives are "officially" informed of his death—and burial—a week later, but public announcement is not made for perhaps a month, when a general feast is held. According to Meek, however, "the real funeral feast" will not be held until the dry season (presumably delayed only in case of death in the rains): this lasts for two days, during which the senior male relatives go to the *obwai* hut, then come forth and join in a general dance.

765 Regarding mourning, Meek says that a widow allows her hair to grow long, refrains from washing and smears her body daily with ochre for one or two months. At the end of this period she is shaved and washed in the river by female relatives. Though men themselves do not make a display of mourning, a woman mourns in

[36a] A woman may choose, apparently, whether she will be inherited by her husband's son or grandson.

[37] The wives of any man rank according to the length of time they have been his wives; but it is not stated whether a wife loses seniority by absence (as the secondary wife of another man), whether a secondary wife ever out-ranks a primary wife, or how the wives of males of varying rank in the compound are ranked (whether, for example, the senior wife of the senior male, or compound head, is inevitably the senior woman of the compound, even though she may be very junior from the point of view of actual residence). It is made clear only that the age of the women does not enter into calculation of their rank.

[38] Meek's qualification of this statement appears in an earlier section of his account of Katab, where he notes that the Katab "does not surround himself with amulets and talismans" nor live in constant dread of evil spirits.

the same way for the death of her brother's wife, retiring to her brother's village for the prescribed period.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Among the Katab, the "high god" is called Gwaza and, according to Meek, appears to be associated with the sky and the moon. Individuals address more or less personal prayers to Gwaza on first seeing the new moon, though it is more usual for prayers to be directed towards the ancestral spirits as intermediaries.[29] It is believed that the majority of the spirits of the dead are content to remain in their abode "Lahira" (a Moslem term), but discontented and evil spirits may return to the world to trouble men. There is no general belief in reincarnation, though the dead are believed sometimes to be reborn, especially in the case of posthumous children of men who have met an untimely death.

According to Meek, the senior male of each household offers thanks for the yearly supply of food at harvest time with the first fruits at the graves of the ancestors. The services of the high priest (*magajin elenowum*) are not ordinarily required; it seems that he is concerned primarily with placating spirits of the lineage whose identity cannot be determined, and with those believed to be troubling not lineal but collateral descendants. Some original connection between the ancestor and head-hunting cults is suggested by the fact that the *elenowum* was custodian of skull trophies.

Also associated with the ancestral cult is the public cult of the *obwai* or "tutelary genius" (Hausa, *dodo*) who seems to represent generally the plurality of ancestral spirits and particularly the spirit of the ancestor of the clan or lineage. From the Katab, specifically, Meek was unable to get what he regards as a satisfactory account of the cult and the beliefs surrounding it, "which," he concludes, "is not surprising, as the . . . cult was found in many instances to [be] an importation from neighbouring tribes or to have been derived from the Aku clan, whose *obwai* takes precedence over all the others."[30]

The cult has the appearance of a male secret society and is used largely as a means of disciplining women and children; "if a theft is committed in the village the shrill voice of the *obwai* is heard." An *agwam obwai* presides over the cult in each lineage (village). The main festival introduces farming operations just before the first rains, and the whole community brings to the *obwai* hut[31] offerings of beer, beniseed, goats, chickens and porridge. The senior men pour the beer into the common pot in the *obwai* hut, leaving some for the women and younger people, who partake outside. The *agwam* then drinks a little from the pot and asks the *obwai* to grant them a successful farming season. A general feast follows, dancing begins, and the voice of the *obwai* is heard speaking from a place of concealment in the roof. There is another festival at harvest, and the voice is heard a month before, warning the people to make preparations and to "desist from idle disputes." The *obwai* actually appears, in the form of a masked dancer, only biennially.[32]

Rain-making rites also appear to be connected with the ancestors, each lineage having its rain-maker whose rites are associated above all with a particular

[29] God and sky (*choadza*) both appear rather to be derived from *za*, rain, however; see Ikulu religious beliefs, below, p. 86.

[30] Meek's criteria of coherence of belief are not stated; it seems not impossible that the language problem, or even an understandable reticence may have lain at the root of his difficulty in obtaining a complete account of Katab beliefs.

[31] The only round hut in the village, accommodating 30–40 people and provided with mud benches.

[32] What the term "obwai" actually means to Katab, initiated or uninitiated, is not clear. From Reynolds' account of it among Kaje, it seems that members of the cult understand the term to apply primarily to the hollowed-out "seed" (pod, or "gourd"?) of *Oncoba spinosa* used to produce the spirit-voice, though the uninitiated understand "obwai" to be the name of the spirit whose voice is heard. In view of the supposed western origins of the cult it appears significant that Edgar in his Gbari dictionary enters *obwe, obuwe* as "*Cucurbita lagenaria:* a calabash, gourd." No embodiment of *obwai* appears among Kaje, but among Katab and Kagoro *obwai* may appear as a masked figure.

2: Gunn E-4 (no date) 1956 FF38 Katab FF38
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woman in the stress of childbirth. A traditional fine of one goat was—and presumably still is—paid by the offender to the *niewhop* of the woman's husband's clan; it is said that the offender often emigrated, presumably as a result of ritualized public ridicule.

Burial

760 764

According to Tremearne, death is traditionally ascribed to "the evil wishes of some person." When a death occurs, women related to the deceased gather and wail through the remainder of the day, and horns may be sounded, while people—not precisely identified by Tremearne—collect, often coming from neighbouring villages. The corpse is wrapped in a mat for interment, normally in a fresh grave: women and children remain indoors[88] during the proceedings. A fowl or goat may be sacrificed, the spilling of blood being apparently part of the rites, and eaten by the (male?) kin. The decanter-type grave is located, according to Temple, close to the porch of the house if the deceased had children, or outside under the shelter of the wall. Seven days later, adult males (presumably of the lineage or clan) 765 gather for three days of drinking and feasting, drumming and horn-blowing, after which men of the deceased's household shave their heads, and the widows (normally clean shaven) let their hair grow for a month and remove the *oyam* until remarriage. Between the day of burial and the final feast, the hoes used to dig the grave are left out of doors.[89]

Under some circumstances, apparently, ancestral skulls were exhumed and preserved, but the more significant details of Kagoro practice in this connection are precisely those which are lacking in all accounts.

775

Temple's account of beliefs in an after-life held by Kagoro contains contradictory features which it is impossible to reconcile on the basis of available evidence. According to Temple, the Kagoro believe that there is a stream dividing life from death, beyond which the spirits of the dead reside; here, primary mates are united, with their unmarried children. On the other hand, they believe that all souls survive and become ghosts, but that they may be reborn in the body of a descendant, and live once more as ordinary mortals. The "ghosts" must be constantly propitiated with food and drink, for neglect would be followed by punishment. They are regularly consulted, particularly about war and hunting, by the elders, who spend three days in the sacred grove.

The second account is presumably based on Tremearne. Smith, investigating some 40 years later, states that "Kagoro males say that there is no survival after death, though reincarnation sometimes occurs".[90]

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

771

Kagoro beliefs and practices appear to conform generally to the Katab pattern already described, though detail comparable to that supplied by Meek for Katab (or by Reynolds for Kaje, described below, pp. 115–16) are in great part lacking.

776

According to Tremearne, the supreme god is called Gwaza (as among Katab proper and various other members of the Katab Group already described), "a beneficent spirit who helps them against the ghosts of their dead ancestors." Gwaza is popularly invoked at each new moon to bring health and good luck, and also, according to Temple, in time of drought, for rain. Smith, though he appears to concede a belief in a supreme god (Gwaza), implies strongly that such belief does not enter into the annual cycle of rituals.

769

Regarding the spirits of the dead, Smith states flatly that "no cult of ancestor worship was developed" by Kagoro, "since Kagoro males say that there is no

[88] Cf. information on *obwai* under *Initiation*, above, and *Religious Beliefs*, below.

[89] It is not always clear whether Tremearne is describing Kagoro or Kaje practices (or both). It is to be presumed that Tremearne (as Temple) is describing the burial of an adult male.

[90] The circumstances and implications of this statement are discussed below, under *Religious Beliefs*.

2: Gunn E-4 (no date) 1956 FF38 Katab FF38
Kaje

[761] has eaten his soul.[189] Victims of witchcraft are buried in a variety of ways, determined by age, sex, marital status, kinship status, etc. A person dying of an 766 apparent disease is adjudged a witch and buried away from the compound, perhaps even in the bush, with no ceremony. A person dying from some accident, for example, one struck by lightning, is buried within the compound, as are the first category of dead described above, but without the ordinary rituals: exactly how Kaje explain this type of death is not clear from Reynolds' account.

764 The most elaborate burial ceremonies are those for the old, and little differentiation is made as to the sex of the deceased so long as he or she is survived by a numerous progeny. First, the *gado kapiyi* examines the body to determine the cause of death; then the *gado abwai* attends the body and the voice of the *abwai* is heard, whereupon the *gado abwai* " announces to the women that the old man has now become a *dodo*."[191] A vertical shaft is dug 3 or 4 ft. deep, and from this in both directions a tunnel to receive the body, head to the north, face to the west. The grave is sealed with a stone.

A feast is held directly by men of the lineage. Further celebrations with feasting and dancing are held before the next sowing, for all the dead of the lineage since the last sowing. The major lineage appears to be the unit for these celebrations.

At the end of the general celebrations, the patrilineal descendants of the deceased gather in his compound for five successive days for ritual feasting. After 765 this the wives and mother of the dead man go into mourning for one month, when they cover themselves with red earth and abstain from bathing and shaving themselves. They will not let rain touch their bodies, nor will they go to the stream or cross it, even by a bridge. They eat rich food, but after dark, and take no part in the preparation of food. They do not speak to any male who does not belong to the compound and do not have sexual relations, for which reason they all sleep in one hut. They do not wear the *ndyig* (*?oyam*), but a girdle made of raphia, and always carry a hand-broom. At the end of a month the women are shaved(?), and for this occasion beer is made with corn brought by the married daughters of the classificatory daughters of the dead man at the time of the funeral ceremonies. The major lineage collects and drinks the beer and feasts ritually on beans.

766 The death of a civil head is kept secret for a month, when his successor is publicly announced. In the case of *gado kapiyi* and *aliyinhwap* bush hunting is a feature on the day of burial, and the deceased is interred in his skin loin-covering rather than in cloth garments. In the case of the *gado abwai*, the distinctive feature occurs only two or three years after burial, when an elaborate memorial service 769 (*aswa*, or, popularly, *tswandik*) is held. The rituals appear to serve as the con- 794 firmation of formal investiture of the deceased *gado's* successor, for in fixing the date of the celebration, cult affairs from the death of the late *gado* are reviewed, and the state of the public morals with which the cult concerns itself. When the date has been set, fibre neck-cords (*tswandik*) prepared by the Madauchi are distributed among the wives of the community, after grain in the fields begins to form heads. The actual ceremonies do not take place, then, until the height of the dry season,

[754] [189] The distinction observed here between a witch and a sorcerer is based on practice; the sorcerer uses " medicines " and rites; the witch may be entirely ignorant of his own supposed activities, engaging in witchcraft while asleep, in a trance, etc. Kaje appear to feel no particular animus towards witches in general, nor even towards suspected specific witches while they are alive; but note supernatural sanction against witchcraft, and the treatment of supposed witches after death.

[775] [191] It cannot be recalled too often that the concept of the " dodo " needs more careful investigation throughout this area than it has yet had. Two definitions are current among Europeans: more usually the " dodo " is regarded simply as " a spirit "; a more subtle view, perhaps, holds that it represents the collective embodiment of the community's dead. The latter definition is convincing in certain contexts, but the existence of a number of " dodoes " in a single group suggests that the former may also have a degree of validity, and that the two definitions should be mediated, as it were, or new and more precise terms from the vernacular adopted.

3:Temple G-4 (no date)1922 FF38 Katab FF38
Kagoro

342 a hollow groove where a mat or shield might be fixed. Within the hall is a bigger apartment, with a mud shelf over the inner doorway, and with a low wooden bed of palm fronds or bamboo on either side—one for the wife, the other for her family. The inner walls are only some three or four feet high and are either made of red mud or mud blackened with charcoal. Sticks or horns are stuck in them as pegs and the women use low wooden stools. Another double doorway leads to an inner chamber, which is much higher and contains a mud granary on little legs. There is a circular passage-way round this, which is sometimes ceilinged and above which is an attic. The granary is always to the south and the roof is supported by bamboo poles; an egg or bottle is commonly put at the apex for luck. From the outside the huts appear to be round in shape, with the addition of the low oblong verandah roof. The floors, and sometimes the whole compound, are trampled hard, and bits of shard or even cowries are added for ornament. Outside the entrance palm logs, some six feet in length, are let into the ground perpendicularly, and are used as palaver centres.

[352] [197] [351]

142 The Kagoro are small in stature, the men slim and well built, the women ungainly. As a race they are debased by excessive drinking. Their heads are somewhat conical in shape, as infants' heads are massaged to prevent their becoming broad, like those of load-carriers whom they despise.

[273] [356] [482]

302 Women have their heads shaved from the time they are six years old, and at the age of seven or eight their lips are pierced for the reception of small wooden plugs about one inch in diameter and three-quarters of an inch in depth. These are, however, not universally worn. Young girls wear a loose girdle of native string, which is exchanged for a bunch of leaves in front and a thick stem of plaited palm fibre with a broad base behind, hung from two strings. This is a symbol of marriage, though very old women may discard it in favour of leaves. Widows are obliged to exchange it for leaves during the period of mourning, which lasts from ten to sixty days, when they must also allow their hair to grow and plaster their bodies with red earth and grease.

304 291 [765]

301 Beads and horse-hair are made into necklaces, beads and beans into finger-rings. Open brass bracelets and ear-rings of blue glass beads, string or sticks, are worn by both sexes, the latter only in a man's left ear. Old women sometimes wear an iron band round the calf of the leg, while men wear light iron chains round their necks and waists, especially when they are courting.

302 Both sexes smear their bodies with red earth, and for feasts men habitually coat their legs with it to the knee, while women add a black stripe an inch wide from forehead to navel, and sometimes an additional narrow line on both sides. These lines may

3:Temple G-4 (no date)1922 FF38 Katab FF38
Kagoro

262 Guinea-fowl and francolin are not eaten, nor may women eat dogs or fowls, though these restrictions do not apply to old women. Rats, mice, and bats are made into soup and eaten with the ashes of guinea-corn or millet, which is sometimes used in place of salt. The favourite drink besides gia is honey and millet, and palm wine.

The pith of wild paw-paw is used to heal wounds, and a hot iron is applied to an aching tooth to make it come out easily. No amputations are performed.

When a death occurs women wail and horns are blown. The corpse is wrapped in a new mat of plaited palm leaves, and men carry it to the grave amid shouting, blowing and drumming, while the women and children remain indoors. The chief priest wishes the spirit of the dead and the bereaved family well, and the body is lowered into a grave shaped like a prayer-board, either close to the porch of the house if the dead had had children, or outside under the shelter of the wall.

Males are laid on their right, females on their left, sides, with faces towards the sacred grove. Sticks are placed over the mouth of the grave and are plastered with clay. Branches of shea and lunn trees are intertwined and placed on the grave, and a pole bearing the family skulls is set up. A goat, or in the case of a poor man a fowl, is killed, and the flesh divided amongst the relatives, whose presence is required. In old days on the death of a big man, people were killed at the funeral that their spirits might accompany his. The skulls were left on the grave till the flesh was gone, when they were added to the family trophies.

After seven days the bereaved relatives make beer, and four days later a pot of it is brought to the grave, on which fresh shea and lunn branches are laid, and the most important Elder present pours some over the grave, saying mystic words the while, three several times. A goat or fowl is again killed and the blood poured over the branches. The flesh is cooked and eaten, and the beer drunk by the men, who sit round in a circle. The remainder of the beer is consumed in the sacred grove, the women and children drinking in their own houses, while a perpetual sound of horns and drumming is maintained.

On the occasion of the first harvest after a burial, gia and acha flour and water are poured over the grave and another drinking festival held. Subsequently if anyone dreams of the dead beer must be similarly obtained.

A grown-up man inherits his father's house, and such wives as his father's brothers may not care to take. In the event of the sons being children the deceased's eldest brother manages the property for them.